



ST. LOUIS ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT *ESPRIT*

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The Corps of Engineers is no longer her master. The former Dredge Burgess has a new owner and silently awaits her fate.

Corps History Revisited at St. Louis District

Dredge Burgess served the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Memphis District for nearly six decades before being sold in the early 1990s.

She caught our attention several weeks ago as she was towed south, finally coming to rest on the Illinois bank of the Mississippi River, not far south of the St. Louis District Service Base. We pursued the identity of her owners and learned she was owned by American Milling Company, parent company of American Boat Company.

Recently, firm owner Dave Jump, himself an avid historian, graciously permitted a group of St. Louis District personnel to visit her. They went to take photos and to walk her decks one more time.

We went to try to grasp how “iron men,

in wooden ships, in a time of steam” – lived and worked – long before any of us were born. We learned that Burgess has a steel superstructure, and remain convinced that the men were cast of equally tough material.

We hope that the following narrative will help our readers relive this journey into the past when Burgess and six other dredges served in the Memphis District alone.

There they fought back the alluvial sands of the Mississippi as the River tried incessantly to fill in the hard-won 9-foot, Corps of Engineers-developed navigation channel. Use the pictures and words to follow along on the decks with us as we return to a bygone era when steam and sweat powered dredges on Mid-America’s greatest river.

Her outline shimmers in the St. Louis summer heat. A faint, translucent haze mutes her colors. But enough faded buff and red color (officially “safety red” and “old ivory”) pierce the pollution to identify her heritage. With her characteristic boxlike superstructure, low black hull and a pair of towering smoke stacks, even at a mile, she’s unmistakably a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredge.

But which one?

As curious Corps visitors aboard one of the District’s newest vessels, M/V Grand Tower, approach the aging hulk, her name appears through binoculars: she is Dredge Burgess — a veteran of 58 years service in the Memphis District.

Burgess is nested with aging barges at the American Boat Company, on the Illinois shore. There she lies, rocking gently in the river’s swell as a barge tow

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Commander's Perspective



COL Kevin Williams

It has been thirteen months since I assumed command of the St. Louis District. During my Army career, I have been privileged to serve with or command some remarkable people.

But nowhere have I ever commanded or served with a group of people like the family that makes up the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers here in St. Louis.

The family includes brilliant people and hard working people. And there are heroes amongst us as well.

To be sure, there are a number ways to measure heroism. There is a broad range of deeds that clearly can be called heroic.

In the past month, there have been two incidents that I think meet the criteria for heroism. In them, five Corps employees answered the call when an equal number of citizens found themselves in dire, possibly even life-threatening straits.

Details of these two rescues are elsewhere in this issue of *Esprit*, but let me give you the "Readers Digest" version and my thoughts.

On June 17 at Lock and Dam 24, Lock Maintenance Man Buck Hagan, glanced northward and noticed two people in a boat drifting toward the dam. Hagan quickly radioed lockmaster Chris Morgan to alert him to the situation.

Working together, Hagan and Morgan were able to assist the boaters by dropping safety blocks and ropes to them until a workboat, crewed by contractors involved with the major rehabilitation project at the dam, were able to arrive to pull the boat and its occupants to safety.

Five days later, June 21, Melvin Price Locks and Dam shift leader Terry Miller looked northward briefly while tows were locking through the lock's two chambers.

Through his binoculars he immediately recognized three individuals huddled in the water. They were clinging to their capsized, partly submerged boat.

Miller quickly called Lock Operator Mike Abernathy who rushed to the dam to assess the situation from another perspective and started closing the dam gates.

As Abernathy maneuvered out onto a dam gate to drop rescue ropes, fellow Lock Operator, Ken Scheidigger, joined him to drop ring buoys to the three frantic men below.

As the Corps personnel struggled to save the men, the men's boat was sucked from beneath them and into the dam.

Fortunately the ropes, ring buoys and the fact they were wearing life vests kept the trio afloat until a boat from the Alton Volunteer Emergency Corps could arrive to pluck them from the swirling water.

In these cases, heroism was the result of preparation and willingness to do

whatever was necessary to save another human being. Heroism doesn't have to be jumping on a grenade or charging an enemy machine gun. It may simply be one human responding selflessly when another is in danger.

Occasionally people wonder about the Corp motto: *Essayons*. It is French for "Let us try." In these two cases, five Corps employees – I'll call them heroes – didn't hesitate when they saw danger to their fellow man. Instead, they said, "Let us try." They recognized that if these people were to be saved, they would have to be the ones to save them. So they made the attempt.

When you meet these five dedicated Corps of Engineers employees, thank them for what they did. I certainly do.

Essayons.

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Dredge Burgess Cont. from page 1

passes in the distance.

As a Corps deck hand lashes the new and old vessels together, a small black bird flutters from the top of Burgess' pilot-house. Then all is silent again.

Burgess and an identical sister, Jadwin, were designed by the Memphis District for service on the Mississippi. They were the last steam powered dredges built for the Mississippi River Commission.

Marietta Manufacturing Company in Point Pleasant, W. Va., on the Ohio River began work on the pair in June 1933. Burgess was completed in January 1934. She and Jadwin cost \$502,118.62, each.

At 244 feet long, with a beam of 54 feet and displacing 1,666 tons, Burgess honored the name of Major General Harry Burgess. General Burgess served in the Corps of Engineers for 33 years of his 61-year life. He passed away March 18, 1933, only days before his namesake was christened into service at noon on March 31, 1934..

As feet stir the dust and paint chips underfoot, the visitors' first stop near Burgess' bow. There they overlook the reason for Burgess's existence – the giant 32-foot- wide dustpan head that once reached deeper than any dredge, 40 feet, to excavate sand from the river's bottom.

Today that same equipment rests silently



The dustpan no longer scours the river bed. Instead it's host to crops of weeds.



In 1988 Burgess fights to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel in spite of record-low Mississippi river stages. Photo by: Elmer Holder, Corps of Engineers, (retired)

in the weather, rusting and harboring green grasses and plant growth in dirt that has blown into crevices and holes.

Behind the dust pan head at the front of the hull there was once a towering "spud." This was a 26-inch square, 58-foot long Douglas fir beam that was rammed into the river bottom to secure Burgess.

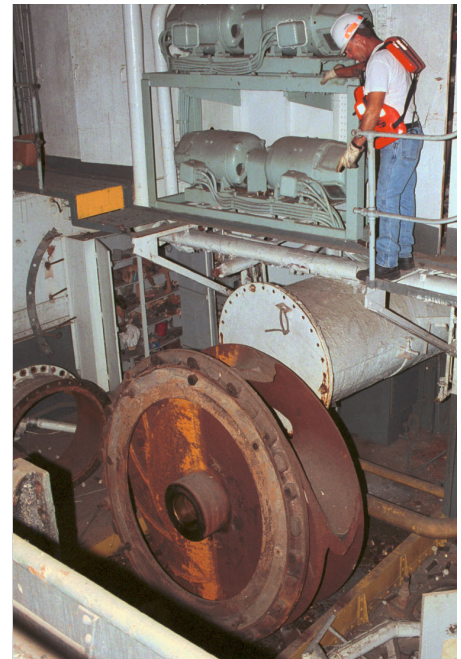
The wooden spud broke often and was replaced with steel. But even that occasionally bent, after which engineers would simply rotate it 180 degrees to bend it the opposite way. In the 1980s, then Dredge Master Harold Ralph tired of the "game" and had the spud removed.

The giant 38-inch rubber hose, 20 feet long and weighing 4 tons, was the largest rubber hose ever produced at the time. It still connects the dust pan head to the vessel's hull. The hose was a major development, replacing a mechanical "ball and socket" joint that leaked heavily and increased efficiency by 17.5 percent. With this fix, Burgess could move 3,500 to 4,000 cubic yards of sand and water an hour though her 2,100 horsepower dredging turbine.

Do you suppose she could still move sand? Climbing inside on her main deck reveals that the answer is sadly, "no."

Her giant turbine pump is gone. Only its impeller remains, more than a man high, and balanced on edge in the bottom of the hull.

Burgess' giant twin steam winches sit silently. A sign on one offers what would



Crane operator Marty Seger surveys the huge impeller, all that remains of the dredge pump.

seem to be good advice: "Danger. Keep Hands Out Of Moving Machinery." Once these giant machines pulled Burgess slowly forward as she excavated sand from the river bottom. Now their throttle controls stand rigidly at full stop.

Moving aft, visitors view the silver-painted double reduction gear case that once transferred the steam energy from her boilers to the turbine pump.

Burgess began life with four boilers. In the early 1940s, two surplus World War



Service base crane operator Marty Seger compares this equipment to his crane. These two winches combined the might of gears and steam and pulled the Burgess forward as she cleared the navigation channel of deposited sand.

Two Navy boilers replaced them after the originals developed cracks. They worked well and long, powering Burgess for nearly 50 years until her retirement.

Further back is a machine shop space where once, skilled artisans could fix virtually anything. A grinder stands mutely, bolted to a bench. A lathe waits patiently for a skilled craftsman.

But the treasure of this space is a stack of map cases. Burgess' engineering drawings are carefully stored, seeming in wait for skilled repairmen to turn their pages to fabricate a replacement part. The drawings trace Burgess from her birth, and through modifications that documented her continuing modernization until the last changes implemented in 1990, just before



Richard Archeski, ED-HQ, reviews stacks of drawings documenting every modification made to Burgess from the day she was built until Memphis District finally decommissioned her.

she was decommissioned and sold.

That completes the tour of the main deck, which was devoted solely to its business and the machinery that enabled that work to be accomplished.

Ascending a steep flight of stairs on Burgess' port (left) side near the stern, visitors arrive on the second deck – or Texas Deck as it was known. Here many of Burgess' crew of 60 ate, slept and lived during off-duty hours.

The transition from working spaces is striking. One can but wonder how the crew lived, ate, socialized. What was life like working on the River more than 60 years ago?



Countless footsteps have worn the deck on Burgess port (left) side.

Like the main deck, this deck features outside passageways on either side. Aft was a large bunk area for dredge hands – junior crewmembers. Forward were other spaces, including storage rooms, the laundry and the galley that prepared three hearty meals every day.

In the galley, an oversized food mixer rests incongruously on a dishwashing machine. A cupboard, its doors swinging open, is home to several settings of dishes. Oh, what rumors, tales and jokes these bowls and plates could perhaps tell.

A sign lies on a dusty counter. It reads: "Employee responsible for cleanliness of this area." No body's name is designated. And it's been a long time since the area has been cleaned.



The galley plates need a good cleaning.

The dining area, or “mess,” forward of the galley, once featured a long table where the crew ate under skylights. Officers’ and mates’ staterooms line the perimeter of the large room. Each stateroom has a door into the dining area and another leading outside onto the deck.

The dining room seems larger without the table. There everything, from work to women (no females were employed on Burgess during her earlier years), to the 1944 Cardinals-Browns cross town World Series, fights were reshaped for nearly 60 years. Radio was the only source of news in an era before television, cell phones and the Internet.

Another deck higher sits the officer’s lounge, spacious with many windows. Here off-duty officers congregated. This area is decorated with rich, dark wood, and it is easy to imagine the smell of musty magazines and pipe smoke decades ago – and sounds of more conversation and perhaps a card game.

Still further forward on this third deck – the hurricane deck, so named because of the relatively cooler breezes found up here – we find the dredge equipment operator’s space. On today’s dredges, the equipment operator works above in the considerably larger pilothouse.

And that is the final destination, the pilothouse from which the vessel was navigated. The pilothouse is now empty. There are no rudder levers and a radar repeater, obviously one of Burgess’ later modifications, lies on its top outside.

Finally, two smoke stacks tower above and behind the officer’s lounge. Once they were black, with a wide red stripe with a narrow white border above and below. A white Corps Castle emblem was centered on each side. Today they are painted primer brown except for the back of the rear stack, where one can still see a patch

of the original red and white stripe. The Castle is gone. Forever.

The paint, once applied with loving care is weathering in places. Vandals left graffiti since Burgess last steamed under the Corps of Engineers Flag.

One wonders at the kind of men who took Burgess out into the river in her earlier days. It was far more treacherous work when crewmen were hired off the bank and before the Corps developed an effective safety program. On April 6, 1934, on Burgess’ sixth day in service, dredge hand James D. Dove gained the dubious distinction of being first person to perish when he drowned. In the late 1930s, the Corps suffered 13 deaths in one year. Much needed safety measures took hold after that. Today the Corps of Engineers maintains an excellent safety record in a still-hazardous environment.



Smoke no longer belches from these stacks, once the most visible symbol of the steam era.

It is almost possible to imagine that some day soon a crew will come aboard, ready to start cleaning her, to scrape peeling paint, oil giant gears and to light off her cold boilers.

Parts of her are in an advanced stage of decay, but other areas look to be easily restorable.

Silent and still, she also lacks the smells of life – of the thick bunker oil she burned, lubricants, the delightful aromas of baking bread and tobacco smoke, mingling with the sweat of honest labor.

As the tour nears its end, there is ambivalence among the visitors. Some retreat quickly to the air-conditioned comfort of the modern M/V Grand Tower. Others, sad and reluctant to step across from Burgess’ deck, stay for one more look or to snap one more picture.

For while it is cool and dry on MV Grand Tower, there is a painful anxiety in leaving Burgess – like when we leave our parents’ or grand parents’ home after a summer visit.

Aboard Burgess, we went back to our youth, when we believed that we could do anything. We wonder if we will ever return – even just once more.

And then we step aboard freshly painted decks and through a hatch into Grand Tower, our way home.

As M/V Grand Tower backs slowly away, we gaze back. All too quickly, the interval between us grows.

Burgess’ colors begin to fade and shimmer in the heat once again. She’s so grand in her form and her history of service. But she’s so sad in her sedate, quiet final years.

What will become of Burgess? She will never dredge again. According to Rick Lamb, of American Boat Company, “It was part of the bid package that she could never be used as a dredge again. If the Corps ever needs anything from her, we’ll be happy to work out something. We bought Oeckerson years ago, and the Corps needed parts for the steam winches. They got them from us.”

Some have bandied about a proposed lease on life as a museum. That has not come to fruition. Her large, heavy and superbly preserved hull may determine her final fate. “She’s big, well built and durable. Her hull would make an outstanding crane barge.”

That would be a humble fate, but also a tribute to those who built her and worked aboard her if she was able to serve again on the river – perhaps to contribute a century of good work. She’s still a tough old girl.

We wish to thank Dr. Samuel Batzili for his comprehensive report “A History of the Dustpan Dredge Burgess,” from which we drew many facts for this article.”



District Lock Personnel Save Five in Five Days

Lock and Dam 24, Clarksville, Mo.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District Lock and Dam personnel saved five boaters in as many days in a pair of rescues June 17 and June 21, 2003.

In the first incident on Tuesday, June 17, two pleasure boaters narrowly escaped a serious situation when quick action by District personnel and Midwest Foundation, Inc., employees, working at the Lock and Dam 24 in Clarksville, Mo. resulted in their rescue.

The two, Mr. And Mrs. Jason Lemons, of Pleasant Hill, Ill., were boating in the Mississippi when their motor died and left them drifting helplessly toward the Corps of Engineers Lock and Dam.

The action started when Corps of Engineers maintenance man, Buck Hagan, noticed the small boat some 300 feet from the dam and drifting closer. Mr. Lemons was waving a red shirt.

Hagan quickly raised the alarm on his radio, alerting lockmaster Chris Morgan, who was working out on the lock wall.

Lock 24 has been the scene of a major rehabilitation for the past two years, and Morgan asked the on-scene contractor, Midwest Foundation, Inc., for their help. Midwest Job Site Supervisor, Ross Springer, immediately directed his boat operator, Dan Eilerman, to get underway. Two nearby union craftsmen working at the lock and dam, George Palmer and Mike Brangerberg, unhesitatingly joined Eilerman in the potentially dangerous rescue mission.

As the small craft drifted closer to the dam, the contractor vessel Midwest II, was quickly locked through from the downstream side of the lock and dam by assistant lockmaster Dave Nulsen. This enabled it to proceed into the pool above the dam to attempt the rescue.

Meanwhile, Morgan and Hagan raced to a position above the dam gate from where they were able to lower safety blocks on lines to the approaching



Maintenance man Richard (Bucket) Hagen and Lockmaster Chris Morgan teamed up with employees of Midwest Foundation, Inc. for a successful rescue at Lock 24.

terrified boaters. They assured the boaters that their boat would not be swamped. Hagan climbed down onto the dam's concrete bullnose structure, from where he was able to toss a line to the Lemons.

As the Midwest Foundation boat maneuvered carefully toward the dam, Buck Hagan was able to throw a monkey fist – a weight that enables a line to be thrown accurately – to its deckhand. Then Eilerman was able skillfully to ease the boat and its occupants away from the dam. From there he towed it upstream to the safe confines of the Dundee Slip.

Careful pre-planning with the contractor and quick response by all on scene resulted in two relieved boaters making it safely to shore.

Lockmaster Morgan emphasized that it was fortunate that the dam's 15, 80-foot wide gates, were open only three feet each.

Morgan described how higher settings result in water being sucked down in front of the dam gates before it exits under them in a fury of whirlpools,

eddies and turbulence. "If that had been the case and they had capsized, it's extremely unlikely they would have survived. That's the reason people have to exercise extreme care around dams, either above or below them," Morgan stated.

The Pleasant Hill couple was reportedly on a day pleasure trip. Their five children were at home. Pleasant Hill probably looked a lot more pleasant when they returned that evening from their harrowing experience.

Melvin Price Locks and Dam, Alton, Ill.

The second rescue took place only five days later, June 21, to the south at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam, near Alton, Ill.

Shift leader Terry Miller said he had just happened to glance north from the Lock control tower, more than 100 feet above the river, when he saw the potential disaster unfolding.

"We were busy. I don't know why I turned and looked that way at the time.



We had tows in both chambers, so we had plenty to do,” Miller reported. “I thought at first it was one of those sail boards with the sail in the water, but for some reason I grabbed my binoculars and looked more closely.”

What he saw on closer examination was three scared fishermen clinging to their capsized boat. Miller immediately called lock operator Mike Abernathy, who was in the elevator going from the dam’s base to the top of the structure. He instructed him to hurry back down to get a better assessment of the situation.

Miller also quickly started to close the dam gates that were open six feet at their bottoms. “They close very slowly though,” he noted. “So I didn’t know if we had time to get them closed or not. If they are open, water is sucked down in front of them and then under them into the river below.”

As Miller and Abernathy rapidly discussed the deteriorating situation on their radios, the Alton Volunteer Emergency Corps (AVEC), which was monitoring their transmissions, called to say they were rushing to the scene to help.

As it became more obvious that the three men were being sucked toward gate seven on the dam, Abernathy ran down the stairs of that dam pier. There, he was able to move out on to a walkway at the top of the gate and drop a rope. Another lock operator, Ken Scheidigger arrived with ring buoys, which he dropped to the men.

As the three in the water waited, holding onto ropes and ring buoys, their capsized boat was sucked from under them into the swirling water.

Almost simultaneously as the men hung on for their lives, the AVEC rescue craft and a rescue boat from the Alton Belle Casino, from Alton, north of the Locks and Dam, arrived and retrieved the exhausted trio from the water.

Quick action by Corps personnel and rescuers from nearby, and the fact the three boaters were wearing life jackets probably saved all three. Eighty percent of boaters who drown are not wearing



(L) COL Kevin Williams presents Lock Operator Ken Scheidigger, Shift Leader Terry Miller, Lock Operator Mike Abernathy, as Lockmaster Thomas Miller stands by.

life jackets – also known as personal floatation devices (PFD). If these three had not been doing so, those numbers likely would have tragically grown – by three.

That conjecture is further supported by the fact that their boat has still not been found. Only an empty gas tank has been located below the dam.

Another factor also intervened – the immediate availability of lock operation personnel to hurry to the scene to offer assistance.

“There are people who say that for maximum efficiency, we can operate Mel Price by pushing buttons from the control tower,” Terry Miller said. “When things are running according to the book, that may be true,” he agreed. “But when something has to be checked, or a piece of equipment restarted, there’s no substitute for having a human being quickly available to go to the scene.

In this case I’m afraid we’d have efficiently seen three people die. It’s pretty hard to put a price on that. A person on the scene can be incredibly valuable to getting things right when something is wrong,” he concluded.

The three boaters have subsequently

been identified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as: boat owner Randy Humphrey, 39 and passengers Ricky Jones, 41, and Gregory Carpenter, 48, all of St. Louis.

While both the crews at Lock and Dam 24 and the Melvin Price Locks and Dam modestly say that their contributions were all in a day’s work, saving lives at the rate of one per day is not in their job descriptions. Fortunately, however, it is part of their preparedness and “can-do” attitudes.

These individuals truly live by the Corps of Engineers motto: “Essayons – Let us Try.”





St. Louis District Supports Mississippi River Canoeing World Record Attempt.

On May 28 Clark Eid of Cheshire, Conn., and Bob Bradford of Lapeer, Mich. arrived at Mile Marker 0 in the Gulf of Mexico. Behind them lay 2,348 miles of the mighty Mississippi River, paddled in record time: 18 days, 4 hours, 51 minutes. During the last ten miles of this challenge, Eid and Bradford had powered through with a stroke rate of 75+ strokes per minute.

Their journey began on May 10, in the still waters of Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota, when they pushed off in their specially outfitted canoe made of Kevlar. The team's target was the previous world record of 23 days, 9 hours, 51 minutes set in 1989. They would knock an incredible 5-plus days off that mark.

Employees of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had a hand in assisting the record breakers. The Mississippi is the largest U.S. inland waterway and the canoeists had to lock through 29 Corps locks on the upper Mississippi.

Kenton Spading, who works in Water Control at the St. Paul District, spear-headed lock and dam coordination. Spading agreed to do what he could to assist Eid who was his college roommate at the University of Minnesota. The two stayed in contact after graduation.

With his supervisor's approval, Spading worked with St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts. "I compiled a list of phone numbers for all of the locks and dams, along with the names of the lock masters, so the canoe team would know who to call to coordinate their movements," Spading said.

Spading said getting info to field sites went well and operators kept an eye out for the paddlers. He said that some tug boat operators even offered to step out of line and let the paddlers lock thru first in "an outstanding show of good will."

The paddlers raced against time and fatigue. They slept on land only five hours during the 18 days; three hours in Minneapolis and two in Iowa. Eid and



Eid and Bradford look up at Corps of Engineers personnel as they wait alone in the 600 by 110-foot lock chamber 24 at Winfield, Mo. The men are impatient to be on their way in their attempt to canoe the Mississippi River in World Record time.

Bradford were able to gain one more hour of sleep when they tied off to trees in flooded woods in Mississippi. Otherwise they stayed on the move, slept in shifts and averaged about four hours of sleep each, per day.

Nights were the most difficult, especially when they encountered fog near Baton Rouge, La. Both men had to stay awake to avoid floating trees and barges. Eid questioned the sanity of a small watercraft being among the ocean freighters and large tows found between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. "It was a real challenge," he said.

A road crew traveled with the team on land and met them three to four times a day to re-supply them. The men were eating between eight and ten thousand calories a day, eating every two hours.

These pauses gave the paddlers a chance to stretch their legs and take advantage of the trailer's toilet.

Stretching his legs was a must for Eid whose feet went numb after a few days.

"I was the stern man which meant I handled rudder control. All that pressure on your feet, 20 hours a day, is very hard," Eid said. Even three weeks after

the race Eid was still waiting for full feeling to return into certain parts of his feet.

The team pushed through aches, pains and fatigue to arrive at Mile Marker 0 in awe-inspiring time.

Eid credits remarkable stretches of good weather to their success. "It felt strange how we seemed to be traveling through a pocket of good weather. I think the good weather is how we made such amazing time," Eid said.

Reaching the Gulf of Mexico was both great and bittersweet for Eid. "We had a very, very strong finish and it felt great crushing the old record by over five days," he said.

"But it was bittersweet. My wife was on the satellite phone with one of our support crew at the time, but had to hang up because my daughter was having massive seizures at the moment."

Although both men are avid canoeists, who love to paddle and love the spirit of competition, the true motivation for the challenge was to raise awareness and research funds to combat Rett Syndrome and all forms of Leukodystrophy.

Eid's daughter has the life-threatening



disease Rett Syndrome, and adreno-leukodystrophy, a form of leukodystrophy, has affected Bradford's family. All proceeds from the Mississippi River Challenge will go to the Rett Syndrome Research Foundation (<http://www.rsrf.org>) and the United Leukodystrophy Foundation (<http://www.ulf.org>).

Rett Syndrome is a debilitating neurological disorder primarily afflicting girls before 18 months of age.

Most initially lose their speech and motor skills, and develop seizures, repetitive hand movements, scoliosis and severe breathing problems. There is no cure, and therapies to improve the quality of life remain elusive.

Leukodystrophy is a group of severe genetic disorders affecting the nerve fibers in the brain. The most common signs include gradual changes in an infant or child who previously appeared well. Changes may appear in body tone, movements, gait, speech, ability to eat, vision, hearing, behavior, memory, or thought processes. Treatments may include medications, physical, occupational and speech therapies and nutritional, educational, and recreational programs. Bone marrow transplants are showing promise for a few of the leukodystrophies.

With so many people counting on them, Eid said he came to the challenge with intensity hard to control. "My focus was to do all I could do, making every single pull on the paddle as perfect as I could, not to focus on the miles, but to focus on the moment."

"I want the Corps, the Coast Guard and boat captains to know that we appreciate everything they did to support us. All that we accomplished was done as a team and was done to help others. We were motivated by issues far beyond setting a record," Eid said.

Spading was happy to help in the record effort. "I am very pleased that the Corps allowed me and the other Corps employees to help. This type of customer support goes a long way toward our community outreach goals.

"Anytime you can help a customer and a very worthy charity at the same time, it

makes you feel good about your job and the organization you work for."



Eid and Bradford clear Lock 24 at Clarksville. Even as they race south, Lock 25 personnel are preparing to make every effort to hurry them on their way.



Rend Lake park ranger Jacob Long fixes a child's personal water craft and mends a broken heart too.

Rend Lake Beach Blast Not Hampered by Rain:

Early morning rain couldn't cancel the Rend Lake Beach Blast, June 8, 2003.

The event combined family fun and water safety. The sun eventually came out and approximately 200 visitors enjoyed a PFD (personal flotation device, or life preserver) fashion show, face painting and a rain gutter regatta.

The most popular event seemed to be the mock drowning and rescue demonstration. Corps rangers stressed water-related safety programs and judged a sand sculpture contest.



Ranger Tom Bischoff (L) portrays George Drouillard for the Washington state Lewis and Clark events.

Ranger Attends Seattle, Washington, Lewis and Clark Events

Rend Lake Park Ranger Tim Bischoff attended three Lewis and Clark events in Seattle and Tacoma, Washington during the week of 25 - 31 May 2003.

As a member of the Frontier Army Living History Association and Corps of Engineers team of interpreters, Tim portrayed George Drouillard at the Chittendon Locks and Dam project for students from the local area and for the general public.

The five re-enactors erected an 1803 camp that the visitors were able to visit and speak with the expedition members.

The group also participated in the opening ceremonies of the Society of American Military Engineers' Conference as the color guard.

The group attended a reception at the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma for the Washington Historical Society Lewis & Clark Kick-off. This event began the State of Washington's Lewis and Clark Commemoration activities.

This was the first time all five of the paintings, which the Corps of Engineers commissioned for the Commemoration, were displayed together. The presentations were witnessed by more than 2,000.



Mary Ann Owens, (front) is surrounded by family and District friends as she visits the Service Base to view M/V Barron, named after her father Carl Barron.

Daughter of a Former Corps Employee Visits Namesake Vessel at Service Base

Carl Edwin Barron's distinguished navigation career with the St. Louis District spanned 45 years. Born on 26 February 1909, Mr. Barron began his employment with the District as a Deckhand on Engineer Towboats on 22 August 1930.

Barron's duties demanded much of him, and his daughter, Mary Ann Owens who is now 81, never had many chances to share his work life with him.



M/V Barron moves men and supplies to and from the Dredge Potter.

In 2002 the St. Louis District christened a launch boat in Carl's honor - naming her M/V Barron. Unfortunately, because of illness, Mary Ann was unable to attend the ceremony.

Steve Dierker, who runs the district's service base and public affair specialist

Lattissua Tyler learned of this and for more than a year, kept close contact with her and her family in hopes of setting up a private tour of their father when Barron was available.

During the interval, personal letters, pictures and reminiscences about Mary Ann's dad flowed back and forth.

Finally, recently Mary Ann, who is wheel chair bound, was able to visit the St. Louis District Service Base and see firsthand, the boat that celebrates the contributions of her father. There she was met by District Engineer, Colonel Kevin Williams, Steve Dierker and Lattissua Tyler, as well as others who met with Mary Ann to tell her of their appreciation for her dad and to emphasize that M/V Barron was a reflection of our love and respect for him.

During her visit she said "Dad was always out working and he loved his job. For you guys to name a boat after him makes our whole family proud. You have some great people working here, especially to do this for me and my family."

After the tour, District members talked more about Carl Barron and his years of dedicated service to the District and the Corps, sharing their fond memories over homemade cookies and coffee.



Derrickboat Sewell lifts the 3- section, 60-ton nappe for transport back to the Service Base

Service Base Removes Damaged Gate Top from Locks 27:

Crews from the District Service Base removed the damaged 110-foot wide steel top from the main lock lift gate at Locks 27.

Six different barge accidents left the curved nappe (which looks like an airplane wing) with serious damage that had to be repaired.

Service Base crews labored in hot, tight and wet conditions to free the damaged nappe from the gate itself.

M/V Grand Tower then returned Sewell and the barge to the Service Base.

Repairs will be completed and the nappe re-attached later this summer.

The nappe is an important feature at Locks 27. It allows built-up ice to pass harmlessly through the lock during winter operations.



It's hot under the nappe as (L) Service Base welders Craig Nelson and William Redecker install temporary shoring. There's no margin for error here.



My Battle With Beavers

When we last left Larry, three beavers were advancing menacingly toward him and he was falling backward. We'll repeat the last five or so sentence of chapter one – for context, you see.

The three of them came out of the water. They came toward me. The big one's eyes were glassy. I backed up and fell over backwards. The big one jumped on me and held me down. One of the smaller beavers chewed off my wooden leg. Then the three of them ate it. They were burping and on their way to the water when Dave returned.

Dave stared at me with his mouth open. I said, "It's about time you got back. Get your pictures. If Mike expects them to tear out the dam, he can tell 'em himself. At least he doesn't have a wooden leg to feed to them."

Dave said, "Maybe they'll go after his head." I managed to grin and said, "Yeah, maybe they will. That's his problem."

Dave said, "I suppose you know that you're going to have to submit an accident report. By the way, why don't you have your hard hat on?" I said, "Get your damned pictures so we can get out of here."

Dave snapped some pictures. Then, he helped me back to the car. When we got back to the office, it was past quitting time. Luckily, I kept a pair of crutches at the office just for such an emergency.

The next morning, I completed the accident report. I attached a memo stating that I didn't know if this should be called property damage or personal injury. I took it to the safety office. The safety engineer read it. He stared at me, speechless. He read it again, shook his head and banged it on his desk. He said, "I'm going home. I have a headache. We'll talk about it tomorrow."

When I got back to the office, Mike and Dave were waiting with two mean looking guys. Mike said, "Boy! You're

in deep doo-doo." Mike introduced me to the other guys. "This is Mr. Bruiser. He's from the Illinois Department of Conservation. And this is Mr. Cruncher from the Product Safety Commission." I gestured to shake hands with them but Mr. Cruncher pushed my hand away and they backed up.

Mr. Cruncher said, "The beavers that ate your wooden leg died. I suppose you didn't know that the plastic reinforcing is lethal when ingested by beavers. There was no warning label on it. You know that's in violation of federal law. This incident will be investigated. I'm sure we can trump up something to charge you with."

Mr. Bruiser said, "In violation of Illinois State Law, you fed a toxic substance to an endangered species. We'll take care of that when the Feds are done with you."

Authors Note: I want to add this disclaimer. The story that you have just read is fiction. Any similarities between the events in this story and actual events are coincidental. Further, even though my boss's name was Mike and several of my co-workers were named Dave, any similarities between the characters in this story and actual people are coincidental.

By Larry Hamilton



Lock 25 Garden Prospers

In the February issue of Esprit, Teresa Montgomery told us about her gardening efforts at lock 25. She and maintenance mechanic John Robinson now have results.

Great Rivers Museum Update

What a difference a few days can make.



Day one. The shipments begin arriving.



Day two. Skilled workers assemble the complex shapes of one of the displays



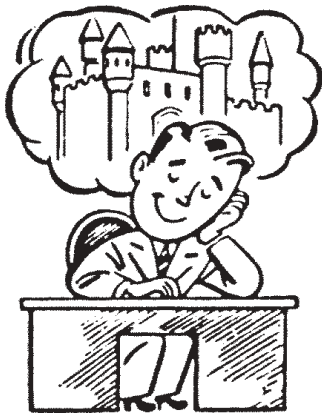
Day five. Contractors cover the bare framework with plastic laminate.



Fitting the graphic panels completes one area of the display space.



The Way I Remember It



The Way I Remember It?

I just finished our annual environmental river engineering trip on the Mississippi River. This is an annual event during which the river engineers meet with the Federal and State Resource people and discuss our river engineering program.

Our goal during these trips is to discuss and agree on ways to modify our traditional channel improvement structures by incorporating new and innovative environmental features.

Once again we had a very successful meeting with our customers and our partners. Dave Busse, Chief of the Potamology Section and Rob Davinroy, Chief of River Engineering presented an impressive program to our team members.

During this trip I had a few moments to reflect on a certain reach of the river in the vicinity of the confluence of the Kaskaskia and Mississippi Rivers. Historically this is a very fascinating area. Two pictures tell the story very graphically. Both were taken from the same location, but approximately 100 years apart, atop a hill near Fort Gage. You can see the grave stone markers on the slope of the hill as you look towards the river below. Just across the river in the first picture you can see the original village of Kaskaskia. In the second picture you cannot see Kaskaskia – what happened?



The town of Kaskaskia is just visible through the distance haze in the 1892 photo.
Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society

First, let's look at this survey made in 1876 by Colonel J. H. Simpson of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He was the first Commander of the St. Louis Engineer District. This survey shows how close the Kaskaskia and the Mississippi Rivers were at that time. The accompanying report states the shortest distance between the two rivers on 16 March 1876 was 2080 ft.

Colonel Simpson concluded then, "The Mississippi is advancing towards the Kaskaskia." He further stated, "It will probably be but a few years before the Kaskaskia will join the Mississippi in this bend. What the consequence of a junction of the river in the Kaskaskia Bend may be . . . cannot be foretold with certainty."

After much discussion, an attempt was



Colonel J. H. Simpson, the St. Louis District's first commander prepared this 1876 survey of the Kaskaskia and Mississippi Rivers.



St. Louis District Archeologist Terry Norris took this photo in 1992. All evidence of the former town of Kaskaskia are gone.

made to stabilize the caving of this bend in 1877. Brush and stone were placed along 1100 feet of the bank near the head of the active caving.

River engineering was in its infancy and different types of bank stabilization were being tried.



Construction of Willow Mattress bank stabilization /Missouri Historical Society

In this instance a willow mattress was woven together on a barge. As the mattress was finished, it was launched down the "ways" and then the mat was floated into place and attached to shore piling. Then a stone barge was brought along side and the mattress was weighed down and sunk in place to protect the bank line.

Following the next spring rise in 1878, an inspection of this new revetment revealed the following: "There are serious grounds to apprehend that the

revetment is near, if not wholly lost. The changes at this locality during the winter and spring have been great, the caving progressing more rapidly than ever before."

The two rivers came together in the spring of 1881.

The river engineers began to discuss the future of this area. Should the junction of the two rivers be left alone or should they attempt to restore the old alignment.

One engineer wrote, "This would be an operation of great magnitude and should be undertaken only with that understanding. Whether it could be finally accomplished at all is doubtful. To move bodily one of the largest rivers in the world from one place to another is no small undertaking."

The river engineers recognized the threat to the village of Kaskaskia and said, "Experience has shown that the land which is immediately threatened cannot be protected without turning the river entirely away from it. These injuries, if inflicted by the river, are the act of a power from whose judgment there is no appeal."

The village of Kaskaskia was now in the hands of the Mississippi River. In 1899, the Mississippi River achieved

dominance over the Kaskaskia River and had reached an acceptable alignment. Work was resumed on stabilizing the location of this reach of river.

Look at the two pictures (taken from the hill at the cemetery) again. The black and white photo was taken in 1892. Note the steeple of the church and the numerous other buildings. The color picture reveals the village of Kaskaskia has disappeared. The change in the course of the Mississippi River had been completed and was flowing in the same channel as we observe today in 2003. As the river engineers predicted in 1881, the first village of Kaskaskia succumbed to "a power from whose judgment there is no appeal".

And, by the way, this also answers a trivia question: is Illinois on the east or west side of the Mississippi? The answer? Both sides. When the Mighty Mississippi assumed the Kaskaskia's channel, this created Kaskaskia Island, which, while it is still part of Illinois, is west of the Mississippi River. That's the rest of the story.

Claude Strauser



Tom Kennedy and Claude Strauser really appreciate Grandtower's airconditioned pilot house after touring Dredge Bugess.

Claude was a welcome guest on our recent Burgess visit. His vast knowledge of the river enhanced everyone's understanding of dredging on the mighty Mississippi. Claude was always ready with the correct answer to any questions. His narrative helped bring the Burgess back to life.



Locks 27, Granite City, IL



Millie Meyer, secretary at Locks 27

Millie Meyer has been working at Lock 27 in Granite City, Ill. since November of 1986. With an hour and forty-five minute commute both ways, Millie's scheduled start time 6:30 a.m. seems all the more early.

Millie moved to Ste. Genevieve shortly after her husband was medically discharged from the Army in 1995. Millie and her husband Ernie will celebrate their 31st wedding anniversary in August. They were both serving in the Army at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. when they met.

Millie and Ernie's family includes three cats and one dog. Their dog Stevi Ann, named after singer Stevi Nicks, is half German Shepard, half Chow and was rescued from a neighbor who kept the dog locked up all the time. Two of their cats, Summer and Ginger, were rescued from the Wal-mart parking lot, and the other cat, Boomer, was found in a box at a local greenhouse.

Millie, who has an associate degree in horticulture, displays her green thumb in the office. A 4-inch ponytail palm she bought in 1978 is now so big it's pushing

up against the ceiling tiles.

In the office Millie provides administrative support to a staff of 16. She enjoys the small office environment saying that everyone feels like family. Millie also takes care of credit cards, travel and training, and answers the phone.

Millie acts a bit like a telephone directory for the district since Lock 27 is the only phone number in the local phone book. "I'll get a lot of calls for the other locks," she said.

Most people, she says, are surprised to find out there is a lock in Granite City. Millie enjoys educating people about the economic importance of Lock 27.

"Anything heading south of St. Louis has to go through 27," she said. "We lock through about 80 million tons a

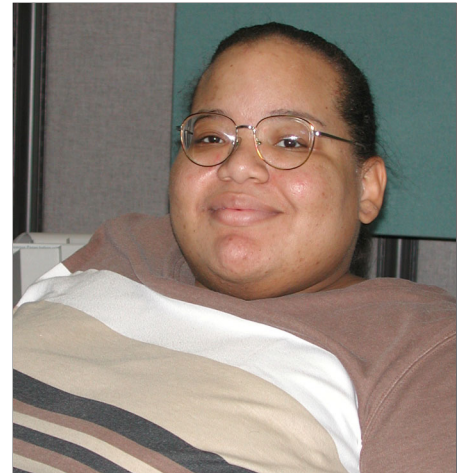


This giant pony tail palm is the direct result of Millie's green thumb. 25 years of loving care produced this result.

year." Lock 27 is also unique because it's the only district lock that doesn't have a dam; it's located on a canal, and it's the last lock on the Mississippi.

In her free time Millie dedicates a lot of time to caring for her husband who had a heart transplant in 1995 and suffered a stroke in 2001. She still finds time to relax by reading and rubber-stamping homemade greeting cards with her mother and sister who live in the area.

Call 8700, Information Management for Computer Help.



Paula Bell, the voice of extension 8700.

You're computer's in trouble. Who are you going to call? Paula Bell is the District's answer to Ghost Busters.

She coordinates all District computer trouble calls. Paula knows just who will be able to help. She quickly logs your call and contacts IM or contract personnel. Just like the calvary of old, Help is on the way!

When she's not solving computer problems, Paula likes to read. She's especially fond of True Crime and Stephen King books.

Paula is skilled in Native American loomwork and makes bracelets, chokers and similar items.

You may also find her watching an action or horror movie.

Paula, one of four children in her family, is a native of Carbondale, Ill., and moved to the area to work for the Corps.



Retiree's Corner

Wally Feld is the most recent retiree. He brought some old pictures to share.

He challenged us to see how many folks we could identify. He also had an organizational chart dating back to 1930.

Speaking of pictures, Charlie Denzel brought an old 1944 navigation photo of John Jansen. We held an impromptu contest to see who could identify the person.

Wally was the only winner. I'm sure it helped knowing that Charlie had lunch with John on Wednesday.

John is now 93 years young still lives by himself on Teshire, in a house he built back in the fifties.

He shared some construction stories with Charlie about back when old locks and dam 26 was being built in the mid thirties. He remembers a construction worker standing on a Missouri side cofferdam and falling to his death. His head came in contact with a re-bar and it was not a pretty sight.

One day he said four men in



business suits were standing on a cofferdam cell when it collapsed and they fell to their deaths. John said that 11 people died during the construction of the dam. At least that is what John recalls.

John has lost some weight and wasn't feeling up to going out. Charlie brought him a sack from Steak 'n Shake; one of his favorite eating places, next to Applebees.

Stan Wiseman had an interesting story about the Rend Lake Manager, Phil Jenkins. (Sorry Phil) (but news is news—LOL). Phil needed some money to go to college and his dad provided it for him. However, instead of going to college, Phil went out and bought a shotgun. So back to Dad with a request

for more money. When pop found out what Phil did with the money, he sent him a large jar of peanut butter and a box of crackers. Great story Stan.

Alex Dombe is taking a six-week trip to Hungary, his birth place. Alex is leaving 9 July and is very excited. His 9 and 11 year old grandchildren will be making their first trip to grandfather's birthplace.

He is very excited about prospects of showing them around. When asked if they

know the language, he laughed and said, "No." However, his own kids do know the language well. Have a great trip Alex.

Mike Cullen was in town expecting to continue to Memphis for the Lower Mississippi Valley Golf tournament. Mike was told the tournament was to be 19 and 20 June. Apparently the grapevine didn't reach to him when the date was changed to 26 & 27 June.

The best laid plans sometimes go astray. Mike needs an insider at the District office to keep him better informed. Instead of Mike coming to the luncheon, he headed back to Sun City Center, FL and his beloved Eckerts' Drug store.

Sean will have to carry the clan at the tournament just as he did last year.

We really missed the Puricelli's. Marie had open heart surgery on 12 June and was expected to be discharged 19 June. Lou and Helen Schuermann were also absent. Lou was scheduled for some heart tests. Hope they came out OK Lou.

Now for all the new recent retirees and those SOON to be. WE MEET ON THE THIRD THURSDAY AT THE SALAD BOWL. Plan on seeing all of you at the next luncheon on 21 August.

Three-time Senior Olympics Gold Winner

Retired Corps of Engineers employee LaVerne Strotheide, started her Corps career in the St. Louis District at an age when many are thinking about retirement. At age



LaVerne Strotheide

50, she assumed duties as a personnel records clerk. But in four short years she had worked herself out of a job.

By 1978, she had updated everything for the Personnel Office (now Human Resources) and the Computer Room (now part of Information Management Office). LaVerne took a downgrade to serve as vehicle dispatcher for Administrative

Services (now part of Logistics Management Office). It was time to retire.

At age 68 though, she returned to the Corps, taking on clerical work for Real Estate Division. Her duties included the final auction of 86 parcels of land from the de-authorized Meramec Project.

Today, Strotheide has moved on to a second career as a Senior Olympics athlete in competitive tap dancing. And she's pretty darned good – as attested by her third gold medal won in June.

Her personal love of dance started at the age of 12. She turned professional at age 14, singing with 12 piece bands. Her career highlight came when she sang with the Scott Field Flyers for two years.

During this time she also performed USO work. She put her career on hold at age 24 to start a family. "I tapped to a different tune." She married Sid, her

husband of 61 years. Together they had three children and today she enjoys the company of five grandchildren.

She returned to tap dancing in June 2000, studying under master teacher Robert Reed, founder and director of the annual St. Louis Tap Festival. LaVerne has been doing her own choreography since her last lesson, June 2000.

At age 82, LaVerne's an inspiration to others. It will be three years before her niece is eligible for the Senior Olympics. Perhaps they'll do a duet. LaVerne can go 25 minutes without stopping.

Laverne is signed up for next year's Senior Olympics, and inspired by an 86 year-old competitor. She reports her dancing helps fight depression. "Do what makes you happy."

Congratulations, LaVerne. Keep dancing.

Camping with the Corps — Yesterday and Today

by Roger Hayes

For the 36th, campers are showing up at 20 campgrounds scattered between our district's operational projects. These facilities have become very popular for either a weekend camping trip or stays up to twenty-eight days in length. Most of the 2273 campsites at the lakes become occupied during holiday weekends.

Park rangers have reported quite a difference in camping trends over the past few decades. In 1967, when our district's first campgrounds opened, camping equipment consisted primarily of tents with a smattering of popup camping trailers, pickup campers, and small hard-sided campers. Very few campsites offered electricity in the early days.

Fee collection was initially performed by "roving rangers," who visited each campsite, collecting cash payments and dispensing receipts filled out by hand. After a few years, fee booths were constructed. They served as welcoming and check-in stations for arriving campers, and made the collection and transmittal of fees more secure. In the late seventies, contract gate attendants took over fee collection duties from park rangers, and continue to perform that function today.

Over the course of the next decade or so, electric lines were trenched in, and pedestals with outlets were installed at the majority of available campsites. Prior to the 80s, 20-amp service was sufficient; most campers plugged in only a fan, light, or radio.

During the late 70s and through the 80s, the popularity of camping increased, probably in conjunction with the development and increased use of America's interstate system. As Americans took to the road, the travel and recreation industry responded by providing larger recreational vehicles for

trips of longer duration and with an increasing array of amenities including air conditioning.

As larger camping units with air conditioners found their way to our campgrounds in the 80s, park rangers began hearing complaints of electric outages. Because 20-amp service was insufficient to meet the changing needs of newer, larger recreational vehicles, rangers quickly learned the location of circuit breaker panels in each campground. This led to an upgrade of campground electric service to 30 amps.

During the same time period, recreational vehicles (RVs) became longer, and camping parties began arriving in multiple vehicles. All of a sudden, the length of our camping pads, many of which were originally designed to accommodate a popup and its towing vehicle, no longer met the needs of our customers. Illegal parking became a common occurrence. Our projects responded by lengthening campsites and developing parking lots for additional vehicles.

The escalation continued, and today large camping rigs can be found in each of our district's campgrounds. Some of them exceed 35 feet, the size of a bus, and have "tip outs" that extend the sizes of living rooms, dinettes, and bedrooms. Many of these units come with price tags that often exceed \$100,000. Quite a few of them have multiple large, roof-mounted air conditioning units, furnaces, televisions with satellite receiving systems, microwave ovens, refrigerators, full bathroom facilities, and closed-circuit television systems for rear visibility while on the road.

The tent or small popup that once offered a weekend get-away has evolved into a fully functioning home on wheels. It's been estimated that a million Americans are "full-time RVers," living in their recreational vehicles, a phenomenon that wasn't possible a generation or two ago.

Today, the standard for electrical service at campsites is 50 amps. Meanwhile campers are increasingly calling for campsites with full-hookups offering sewer and water lines as well as electricity.

The advantage to campers of sewer and water at each site is that they no longer need to rely on campground shower buildings, but can utilize their own showers and bathroom facilities without worrying about filling holding tanks.

They would be able to fulfill their hygienic needs without leaving their RVs.

Similar to campsites, our campground fee booths have also kept pace with technological advances. Computers now automatically link campgrounds with a nationwide reservation service, and the majority of funds collected are transmitted electronically.

A common remark heard by many of the park rangers, gate attendants, and operational project managers who come in regular contact with campers is that the Corps operates many of our nation's finest campgrounds. Many campers have learned to look for Corps projects as they travel our nation's highways, confident that they will find there a campground to their liking. Our campgrounds are known to be aesthetically pleasing, with plenty of open space, and with very adequate levels of services.

The Corps of Engineers has become a main provider of outdoor recreation and is poised to remain so in the future. Most of our operational projects are located within easy driving distance of approximately eighty percent of our country's citizens.

In comparison, much of the land managed by other agencies is located out west, where only twenty percent of our population resides. Consequently, when eighty percent of Americans venture forth in search of federal recreation opportunities—and they will—they will find the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is equally certain that our campgrounds will continue to evolve to keep pace with technology and to meet the needs of our customers.

